

Dunkirk, Tether to Trade

Yes, Trade, damn your eyes.

What, you don't like my language? I'm sorry -- well, no, I'm not. Do you know how many times I've had to field this one, from angels so new that they're coughing from the rarefied air down here? I do: three thousand, six hundred and forty-five times -- and it's about to become three thousand, six hundred and forty-six. Grab a spare bench and show some of that Heavenly deference to your elders. It's time for a spot of oral tradition.

*First, look at the harbor. Pretty, no? I remember when it wasn't. Back in 1940 it looked like we in War used to call 'shambolic chaos' as the retreat kicked in. You've been taught about those nine days, no doubt. I'm sure they told you about the retreat, and how we -- excuse me, the British -- managed to pull out our army at the last minute, and what an achievement the whole thing was. But there are damn few teachers that can teach you what it **felt** like to be there.*

"What was it like? Loud. Cold. Not the cold of winter. It was the cold of fear. I was in the BEF during the 1940 campaign, and I can tell you that fear, pain and weariness are diseases that even an angel can catch. Those Nazi bastards had us dead to rights by the end. We were too few, too new, too unprepared to hold back the dam when it burst, and by the end of May we were pushed back here, our heels in the surf. I was praying just as hard as my mates were for a miracle.

And we got one.

Allow me to tell you a secret, child: Heaven still doesn't quite know how the British managed to get so many troops out. We did what we could, behind the scenes -- more or less -- but most of it came from the humans. They came in everything that could float, and kept coming until they couldn't come any more, and they pulled out of the jaws of Hell enough men to ultimately save their cause. They called it a miracle, later, and it was; but it was a human miracle, not Heaven's. This was theirs, bought and paid for with their stubborn determination to not know when they were beaten.

And now I see that you're wondering, 'so why is it Trade's?' Well, it couldn't exactly be War or Stone's, could it? As the man said, you don't win wars with heroic retreats. And though there was gallantry enough shown here, the Sword was overshadowed by Trade. This was one of the larger Trades, child: the British traded space for time, mere things for human lives, and superficial pride for another chance to win. And they got full and honest measure for everything that they paid out.

And the Tether more than paid for itself ... but that's another tale.

As the above might suggest, the formation of a Tether to Trade at the site of a battlefield was somewhat unusual, at least on the surface. However, the alignment of the Dunkirk Tether was a powerful protection against detection: Hell was certain that a Divine link had formed somewhere, but they could never quite determine **where**. Precious resources were used in futile attempts to ferret out War or the Sword, while Servitors of Trade quietly infiltrated the region (and, eventually, the various French Resistance groups). The secret was kept until some time after the eventual liberation of France: today, the Tether is simply another convenient shortcut to the French coast.

But it had its day. Years, really.

Tamaez, Ofanite Friend of the Shareholders (Vassal of War)

Tamaez did not actually start out as a Servitor of Trade: he was once one of Michael's undercover operatives in the British Expeditionary Force. During the Dunkirk evacuation he helped hold the line for as long as possible, staying until recalled. And then he stayed a bit longer than that. When Tamaez finally began his own retreat, the area had already been overrun, so finding a wild Tether was a completely unexpected (but deeply welcome) surprise.

Discovering that it led to Commerce Park was a bit more startling.

Tamaez did not so much enter Trade's service as drift into it. Marc had immediately made the Tether available to the other members of the War Faction. Choosing as Seneschal the brave Ofanite who discovered it in the first place was a fairly obvious gesture. As the years went by, Tamaez eventually decided that he would be more useful in Trade's service: his formal switching in allegiance took place in 1966. From Michael's point of view, this merely

meant that he now had another useful agent of influence to play with.

Tamaez still acts like a Warrior in many ways: his language remains somewhat informal (and sometimes a little profane), he keeps his firearms oiled and he oversees his operation in a military manner. He'll also tell stories about his role in the Second World War to any angel that looks like he'll stand still long enough to listen: luckily, he's a good storyteller. His Role as Thomas Barras, curator of a local museum (which also happens to be the Tether locus) allows him to keep an eye on things ... and point out the sights to apparent visitors.

Dunkirk Tether: Average (10 Forces, standard Flow, Celestial Harbor, Quiet)

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